

November 19, 2009

Washington, DC – Yesterday, Rep. Ben Ray Luján voted to support local firefighters by voting for the FIRE Grants Reauthorization Act of 2009. The bill provides local firefighters with the resources to keep our communities safe, and it passed by a vote of 395 to 31.

“FIRE Grants provide volunteer and career fire departments across the country with vital funding to increase fire fighting capabilities, better respond to medical emergencies, handle natural disasters, and operate more effectively overall,” said Rep. Luján. “These grant programs help provide funding for local fire departments to obtain equipment, provide training, and enlist additional firefighters. Small and large fire departments in both rural and urban regions are able to directly receive these grants – giving each department the power to protect their communities. Supporting local fire departments is more important now than ever before. Many of our states are facing major budgetary shortfalls, and it has become increasingly challenging for local governments to maintain the needed equipment, training, and personnel levels so fire departments can safely and swiftly respond to their many obligations.”

This bipartisan legislation reauthorizes two important firefighter assistance programs – the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program – for the next five years. It authorizes a total of \$2.2 billion a year in grants for local municipalities to upgrade crucial equipment and maintain adequate levels of personnel.

The legislation has the support of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the National Fire Protection Association, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute.

Rep. Luján cosponsored and supported the FIRE Grants Reauthorization Act as it progressed

through the House Committee on Science and Technology. In July, Rep. Luján [chaired a House Science and Technology Committee's Technology and Innovation Subcommittee hearing](#) that reviewed grants for firefighters and first responders. The hearing discussed the reauthorization of the AFG and SAFER grants. Rep. Luján is Vice Chair of the Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation.